

The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

When we are beset by doubts and fears, then we have "graven" an image of God as one Who is weak and helpless and Whose arm is short. When we complain of our afflictions and trials, then we have forgotten the transcendent glory of God as the One Who governs and controls all things and turns them to our advantage.

See "God Is a Spirit" — page 236

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MEDITATION

The Necessity of Infant Baptism

Rev. C. Hanko

Ques. 74. Are infants also to be baptized?

Ans. Yes; for since they, as well as the adult, are included in the covenant and church of God; and since redemption from sin by the blood of Christ, and the Holy Ghost, the author of faith, is promised to them no less than to the adult; they must therefore by baptism, as a sign of the covenant, be also admitted into the Christian church; and be distinguished from the children of unbelievers as was done in the old covenant or testament by circumcision, instead of which baptism is instituted in the new covenant.

Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 27.

Reading this question and answer, we are immediately impressed by the similarity between this and our beautifully concise Baptism Form, which I

consider to be the most beautiful of all our cherished Confessions. Both refer to God's covenant as the basis for baptizing our children, pointing

out that children as well as adults are included in God's covenant (Gen. 17:7, Acts 3:39), because they also are promised redemption from sin through the blood of Christ. Circumcision was the Old Testament sign of God's covenant and was replaced by baptism in the New. Therefore children as well as adults must be baptized.

Both our Catechism and our Baptism Form stress the *necessity* of baptizing our children. This is not left up to the whim or desire of the parents. Nor may this ever be done purely out of custom or superstition. But, as our Catechism expresses it, "Infants are to be baptized." And our Baptism Form makes it even stronger. Parents "may not exclude them from baptism." God also lays this necessity upon us in such a way that we count it a great privilege that we *may* baptize the children God entrusts to us.

In baptism, "God the Father witnesseth and seal-eth unto us, that He doth make an eternal covenant of grace with us." * This "us" includes both believers and their spiritual seed, according to the promise to Abraham, the father of believers in Genesis 17:7: "I will establish My covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations." That seed is the spiritual seed, that is, all those who belong to Christ as members of His body (Gal. 3:16, 29). God establishes His covenant with them in the line of generations. He assures them in His Word and by His Spirit in their hearts, as by an infallible oath, which can never fail, of that ever blessed, glorious promise: I will be a GOD unto you and to your seed after you. This promise is so rich that we shall never fully understand it until our perfection in the new creation.

But what right do I or any of my children have to be included in God's covenant? The answer is that redemption from sin by the blood of Jesus Christ is promised to children as well as adults. As we stand at the baptismal font, or as we celebrate the sacrament of baptism in the congregation, we confess that "we and our children are conceived and born in sin, and therefore are children of wrath, in so much that we cannot enter into the kingdom of God except we are born again." Every baptism service is a confession of our depravity, our sin, and our guilt, causing us "to loathe and humble ourselves before God, and to seek for our purification and salvation without ourselves." Also our children "are conceived and born in sin, and therefore are subject to all miseries, yea, to condemnation itself." Ephesians 2 comes to mind, testifying that we were dead in trespasses and sins, children of wrath, even as the rest of mankind. But GOD! God, who is rich in mercy, and for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ. Powerful word

— quickened us, made us alive as new creatures in Christ! God separates us who are born children of Adam in a world of sin, from this present evil world by plunging us, as it were, into the death of Christ, only to raise us again with Him in newness of life (Rom. 6:4). By a living faith we are united with Christ and assured that we are partakers of Him and all His benefits, not the least of which are the forgiveness of sins, the adoption of sons, and the right to eternal life. God in Christ assures us "that He doth wash us in His blood from all our sins, incorporating us into the fellowship of His death and resurrection, so that we are freed from all our sins and accounted righteous before Him."

How can I be sure that these blessings are bestowed upon me and my spiritual seed? The Catechism states that the Holy Ghost is promised to the infant as well as to the adult. That is, "The Holy Ghost assures us by this holy sacrament, that He will dwell in us, and sanctify us to be members of Christ, applying unto us that which we have in Christ, namely, the washing away of our sins, and the daily renewing of our lives, till we shall finally be presented without spot or wrinkle among the assembly of the elect in life eternal." How can we ever express more clearly and concisely the rich benefits of our salvation than is expressed in that statement? It is true that there are those who receive the outward sign of baptism, but do not have this testimony of the Spirit in their hearts. Yet those who do have this assurance experience the wonders of God's grace already in early infancy, as well as throughout their lives. The Holy Spirit knows how to apply the blessings of salvation also to mere infants, who know more than we often realize. Also in children the Spirit works a daily renewing of their lives and bestows on them the washing away of their sins as heirs of salvation.

By this sacrament we are admitted into the institute of the Christian church as members of the body of Christ. This is not a conditional membership, as if our "full" membership must wait until the time that we personally accept and appropriate to ourselves God's promises by a public confession of faith. As children we are members of the church institute and are treated accordingly, being prepared for the time when we can consciously participate by a living faith in the communal life of the church, particularly in the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Our Baptism Form states that in all covenants there are contained two parts, including our part in God's covenant, not as a second party or a co-worker in the covenant, but as recipients of God's grace. "Therefore are we through baptism, admonished of and obliged unto new obedience, namely, that we cleave to this one God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost;

that we trust in Him, and love Him with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our mind, and with all our strength; that we forsake the world, crucify our old nature, and walk in a new and holy life." God equips us, as it were, with the uniform of Jesus Christ, which distinguishes us from the ranks of Satan's forces. He places us in Christ's army to fight the battle of faith throughout our lives, without which we cannot obtain the victor's crown. True, there are those who wear the uniform, but are still in their sins. They are the fifth columnists, the renegades, the quislings who traitorously resort to the camp of the enemy to oppose the cause of the living God. By their historical presence in the sphere of the covenant they tread under foot all that is holy and transgress God's covenant. They reveal themselves as one with Esau and Judas, so that they also receive a just punishment. Paul speaks of them through his tears in Philippians 3:18, 19. The true soldier of the cross is renewed by God's Spirit, so that he is deeply aware of his own inability to oppose the forces of darkness. He deeply humbles himself before God and seeks his strength and guidance outside of himself. He embraces God's promises and clings to the cross as his only deliverance from sin and death and his sure claim to eternal life. He rejoices in the fact that, before he could discern right from wrong, God in sovereign mercy placed the sign and seal of His covenant upon his forehead. All boasting is excluded! For even in his sorest temptation he rests assured that his heavenly Father will avert all evil or turn it to his profit. He hears God's assuring word: "But now, thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and He that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine" (Isaiah 43:1). For him faith is the victory that overcomes the world. In that confidence he looks forward to the day when he can say with the apostle Paul, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, henceforth is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me at that day" (II Tim. 4:7, 8).

Also as parents we find great comfort in presenting our children for baptism. We do this because we cling to God's promise: I will be thy God and the God of thy seed after thee. What a privilege is ours that God entrusts His own children unto us for a time. We marvel at the fact that God loved us even before we were born, but we marvel far more when we see His love manifested in His precious jewels. How we treasure the evidences of grace in them, the assurance that God's promises are realized in us who are most unworthy. It is in that confidence that we make our baptismal vows before God and His church, and strive to carry out those

vows to the utmost of our power. In fact, all those children that are baptized are *our* children, for they belong to the Body of Christ, of which we also are a part. The responsibility to provide for their instruction in the home, in the school, and in the church is our mutual responsibility. Neither the parents nor we dare to feed the child small drops of poisonous doctrine, no more than we would contaminate his food with wee bits of poison.

Through faith in God's covenant faithfulness we build church edifices and proper school buildings, call ministers to bring us and our children the sound preaching of the Word, and hire school teachers to instruct our children in the doctrine taught in our church. No expense is too great for us in training those children that God entrusts to us in His church and covenant. Ours is the solemn obligation to maintain, in all that we say and do, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:25). For no greater privilege could ever be granted us than the privilege of having God's dear children entrusted to our care, that God may use us as instruments for gathering His saints, building His church, and preparing His chosen for heavenly perfection. We look forward to the day when God's saints will all be gathered and ready to be taken to glory, when we shall stand before the throne with our spiritual seed to declare in humble adoration: See us, Lord, and the children which Thou hast given us, for we are Thine! We have Jehovah's sure promise: (Psalter no. 243:9.)

My oath is steadfast, ever sure,
My Servant's race shall still endure;
His throne forever firm shall stay
When sun and moon have passed away.

* All quotations from now on are from the Baptism Form unless the reference is given.

*The Standard Bearer
makes an excellent
gift for any occasion.
As a thoughtful
expression of your
concern, give the
Standard Bearer.*

EDITORIALS

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

“Act of Secession or Return”

(This is a translation of the document which marks the beginning of the Secession of 1834 in the Netherlands Reformed Church, to which we referred in our editorial in the previous issue. HCH)

We the undersigned, Overseers and members of the Reformed Congregation of Jesus Christ at Ulrum, having observed for a considerable time the corruption in the Netherlands Reformed Church (Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk), as well in the mutilation or denial of the doctrine of our fathers, based on God's Word, as in the degeneration of the administration of the Holy Sacraments, according to the regulation of Christ in His Word, and in the almost complete neglect of ecclesiastical discipline; all of which matters are, according to our Reformed confession Article 29, distinguishing marks of the true Church; having received through God's grace a Pastor and Teacher who set forth to us according to the Word of God the pure doctrine of our fathers and who applied the same both in particular and in general; the congregation was thereby more and more awakened to direct its steps in confession and walk according to the rule of faith and of God's holy Word: Galatians 6:16, Philippians 3:16; and also to renounce the service of God according to human commandments, because God's Word tells us that this is in vain, Matthew 15:9; and at the same time to make us watchful for the profaning of the signs and seals of God's eternal covenant of grace; through this the congregation lived in rest and peace; but that rest and peace was disturbed by the highly unjust and ungodly suspension of our commonly loved and esteemed Pastor as a consequence of his public testimony against false doctrine and against defiled public religious services; quietly and calmly has the congregation with their Pastor and Teacher conducted itself to this point; various very fair proposals were made, both by our Pastor and Teacher and by the rest of the Overseers of the congregation; repeatedly investigation and judgment on the ground of and according to God's Word was requested, but all in vain. Classical, Provincial, and Synodical Ecclesiastical Boards have refused this most just request, and on the contrary have demanded repentance and regret without pointing out any offense from God's holy Word, as well as unlimited subjection to Synodical regula-

tions and prescriptions, without demonstrating that those are in all things based on God's Word; thereby this Netherlands Ecclesiastical Board has now made itself equivalent to the Popish Church rejected by our fathers; because not only is the previously mentioned corruption observed, but in addition God's Word is rejected or invalidated by ecclesiastical laws and decisions, Matt. 15:4, 23:4, Mark 7:7, 8 and they are persecuted who will live godly in Christ Jesus, according to His own prescriptions, recorded in His Word, and the consciences of men are bound; finally on the authority of the Provincial Ecclesiastical Board the preaching of the Word of God by a publicly acknowledged minister in our midst, the Rev. H.P. Scholte, Reformed Pastor at Doveren and Genderen, in the land of Heusden and Altena, Province of North Brabant, was forbidden, and the mutual assemblies of the believers, which were held with open doors, were punished by fines; — taking all of this together, it has now become more than plain, that the Netherlands Reformed Church is not the True, but the false Church, according to God's Word and Article 29 of our confession; for which reason the undersigned hereby declare: that they in accordance with the office of all believers, Article 28, separate themselves from those who are not of the Church, and therefore will have no more fellowship with the Netherlands Reformed Church, until it returns to the true service of the Lord; and declare at the same time their willingness to exercise fellowship with all true Reformed members, and to unite themselves with every gathering founded on God's infallible Word, in whatever place God has also united the same, testifying hereby that in all things we hold to God's holy Word and to our old forms of unity, in all things founded on that Word, namely, the Confession of faith, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of the Synod of Dordrecht, held in the year 1618 and 1619; to order our public religious services according to the ancient ecclesiastical liturgy; and with respect to divine service and church government, for the present to hold to the church order instituted by the aforementioned Synod of Dordrecht.

Finally, we hereby declare that we continue to acknowledge our unjustly suspended Pastor.

Ulrum, the 13th of October, 1834.

(signed) J.J. Beukema, Elder
K.J. Barkema, Elder
K.A. van der Laan, Deacon
D.P. Ritsema, Deacon
Geert K. Bos, Deacon

(Note. At the meeting of the congregation on October 14, 1834 at the home of the Widow Hulshoff almost the entire congregation agreed with this position of the Consistory and also signed the Act of Secession Or Return.)

We shall have more to say about this historic document and about the Secession, the Lord willing, in the future.

For the time being, however, we call attention to the fundamental character of the Secession and to its motive. We may notice that the document calls attention to: a) the corruption of doctrine in the Netherlands Reformed Church; b) the profaning of the holy sacraments; and, c) to the scandalous neglect of discipline. Plainly, the question was one of the marks of the true church. And the issue was that of the true and the false church. This small and despised group of believers at Ulrum did not hesi-

tate to say that the Netherlands Reformed Church was not the true, but the false church. Therefore they separated themselves and *returned* to the old basis of the Word of God and the Three Forms of Unity.

The price of this separation and return, remember, was persecution. I mean persecution in the real sense of the word! The power of the government was turned against the Secession. There were fines. There was imprisonment. There was the forced quartering of soldiers in the homes of the members. There were attempts to prohibit and disrupt the gathering of the congregations. There was refusal on the part of the government even to recognize the congregations of the Secession as legitimate churches.

But the saints endured and persevered, in spite of all the forces of opposition and all the persecution.

Two questions: 1) To how many descendants of the Secession is the matter of the true and the false church an important question today? 2) How many descendants of the Secession today would endure the persecution which their ancestors endured for the sake of their confession?

An Opportunity to Help

From the Session of the Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore I received a copy for the *Standard Bearer* of a letter sent to our Doon Protestant Reformed Church and the Foreign Mission Committee. The letter is under date of November 29, 1983. I waited with publishing it until I heard from the Foreign Mission Committee concerning any action they would take. Since all our Protestant Reformed Consistories will have by this time received word from the Foreign Mission Committee, and since this is a matter of concern for our people and churches, I now publish the letter:

The Consistory
Doon Protestant Reformed Church
Dear Brethren in the Lord,

Greetings in the precious Name of our Victorious Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Further to our letter Rev. No. AA/001/0007, we wish to inform you that the proposal to buy the property at 35 E, Joo Chiat Place, Singapore, as described in our letter was abortive because the

owner had decided not to sell the property. [This refers to an earlier proposal and request for help. HCH] However, we are now finalizing a plan to buy a property at 43 Blair Road, Singapore (very near China Town). Our budget, fund, and needs are shown below:

Budget	
Sale of Property	S\$190,000.00
Legal/Stamp fee	S\$ 15,000.00
Renovation work	S\$ 45,000.00
Total	S\$250,000.00
Fund	
Present Fund	S\$102,000.00
Possible Raised Fund	S\$ 59,000.00
Total	S\$161,000.00

We are short of about S\$89,000.00 and are trusting the Lord to provide our needs according to His riches by Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:19). [Note. It should be kept in mind that the figures above are in Singapore currency. I do not know the exact current ex-

change rate, but it has been running about 50%, i.e., two Singapore dollars to one U.S. dollar. In other words, cut all the figures in half to get the picture of the funds involved. HCH]

The Session at its 18th Session Meeting held on 25 November, 1983 had decided to make use of the property for the following:

- i. as parsonage to house the family of Rev. Arie den Hartog,
- ii. to hold church activities that will eventually lead to the institution of ERCS's 2nd Congregation in Singapore.

We would appreciate if you could share our needs to your brethren in the States, and support us with your prayer and means.

Once again, we would like to express our appreciation for your love, concern and help rendered to us in the proclamation of the Reformed Faith in this part of the world. May the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ be praised.

Christian Love,

(w.s.) Johnson See,
Elder, for the Session

I also received from our Foreign Mission Committee a copy of the letter about this matter which was sent to all our Protestant Reformed Consistories. Here is the letter, under date of January 17, 1984:

Dear Brethren,

The Foreign Mission Committee has received a request from the Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore for financial assistance. This is the Church that has been organized through the missionary labors of our Churches in Singapore. This Church owns no church property, but meets in rented buildings. Now it has purchased an old house in the China Town section of Singapore, which will be renovated for Church use. Property in Singapore is unusually high-priced due to the fact that there is a very large demand for this extremely limited natural resource in this small island republic of three million inhabitants.

The Foreign Mission Committee, with the approval of the Doon Consistory, has enclosed a copy of the letter from the ERCS Session in which the request is made. Further it should be noted that this material is forwarded for your information and prayerful deliberation and is not an instruction from our Synod for collections for this cause.

The following decision was adopted by the Foreign Mission Committee at its December 20, 1983 meeting: "Motion is made to forward the letter of the ERC of Singapore to our various con-

sistories with a cover letter explaining: 1) That the F.M.C. believes this to be a worthy cause, but that we do not have the power to speak for Synod on this matter. 2) That we inform the consistories that we leave compliance to this request solely to their discretion. 3) Should consistories decide to take collections for this cause the F.M.C. will serve as agent for receipt of these monies. Carried."

We thank you for your past support and cooperation in our endeavor to do the work of missions upon the island of Singapore. May the Lord give you wisdom to discern His will and the grace to perform it in the matter that we prayerfully place before you.

In the Service of Christ,

(w.s.) Rev. Marvin Kamps
Sec'y of the F.M.C.

These two letters speak for themselves and make plain what I meant by the title, "An Opportunity To Help." A few remarks in this connection will not be amiss:

1. This is a highly necessary move on the part of the young congregation in Singapore to get a place of their own. They have no such place now, only rented quarters. Besides, the kampong where they now meet is far too small and overcrowded; and in addition, it is slated for eventual demolition.

2. There appears to be every evidence that the church in Singapore is growing rather rapidly, and that it is by no means a dream that in the not too distant future there may be two, and even three, congregations.

3. A look at the figures presented in their letter shows plainly that this is not at all an attempt at free-loading on the part of the Singapore church. They are supporting and proposing to support this project *themselves* — in my opinion, to an amazing and even sacrificial extent. They are only asking for our *help*.

It is my hope that our people and churches will heed this request and help them generously. I am well aware that there are many causes and projects in our own midst which we are privileged to support. But as surely as we have become involved in mission work on this foreign field, so surely we ought also to support the church in Singapore in this project with our prayer and means, even as they request.

*Read and study
the Standard Bearer*

ALL AROUND US

Rev. G. Van Baren

Women in Office

In a recent issue of *Christian Renewal* (Nov. 21, 1983), attention was called to an old article which had appeared in the *Grand Rapids Press* back in December 2, 1972. The quote points to the length some will go in order to promote "women's lib." What was reported in that article is today being done, with a greater degree of refinement, in churches of Reformed persuasion. The article was titled: "Church Women's Celebration Calls Eve's Apple Episode a 'Free' Act." It states:

The forbidden "apple," that storied old lure to human sin, got a new, honored place at a worship service here — as the fruit of freedom.

Church women dreamed up the idea, and celebrated it. They also communed by sipping apple juice. And they joined in affirming the "liberation of apples."

Declaring they rejected "man's traditional interpretation" of the Adam and Eve story, the congregation of Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist, Episcopal, United Church and various other Protestant women chanted in unison:

"We affirm that it does not convey truth to us about apples, and certainly not about ourselves. We hold that Eve performed the first free act."

"Ah-woman," someone added, instead of the usual "Ah-men."

The ecumenical "sister-celebration," held at the Washington Square Methodist Church here recently, was part of a spreading women's crusade for fuller rights in church affairs. . . .

. . . "We as women feel it is time that the church repent of sexism and be reformed," said the Rev. Barbara W. McCall of New York, executive of the United Church Task Force on Women, which sponsored the service here.

It began with readings of the Genesis account of humanity's creation and "fall," the first defiance of God as portrayed by the eating of forbidden fruit — on Eve's initiative. Actually, the story never mentions "apple" — a mere elaboration of folklore.

"We were told that we were agents of evil, corrupters of perfect creation," intoned the leader, the Rev. Tilda Norberg, of Staten Island, N.Y.

Chorused the female worshippers: "We fell for all that."

"We were told that we were subordinate beings,

derived from man, not uniquely created," the leader said, and the worshippers responded:

"We fell for all that . . . We confess that we bowed down to that old ideology. . . ." But they vowed to seek "the liberation of the whole human family and all creation"

Women taking part in the various readings, including a "litany of praise for women reformers," included (list of women leaders)

"Here is the juice of the apple," the leader invited. "Drink deeply of the ferment of freedom." The women quaffed the juice, ate bits of bread, saying: "We celebrate Eve's first free act. Let all creation rejoice."

They also prayed: "O God, creator, we thank you for making us women We believe your words that in your time and place there is no male and female, no mankind or womankind, simply your people. Hasten the day of freedom when we will all be one, even as you are one."

They also sang a hymn of "My Mother's World, instead of the conventional 'My Father's World.'" Some of the revised words went: "She shines in all that's fair; in the rustling grass I hear her pass. She speaks to me everywhere."

Now, the above makes one to shudder. How can any, calling themselves children of God, so horribly treat Scripture? How can such openly deny the plain teaching of Scripture — making fun of the awful fall of Eve and Adam into sin? How can such profess to rejoice in the "apple" which Eve ate to her condemnation? How can such make a "communion service" of such sin?

Yet, out of this sort of corruption has arisen the "women's lib' movement in the churches. And there is some real truth in what the women did in the article. Their action within the churches represents indeed the same sort of action of Eve in Paradise. She would not listen to the Word of the Lord but was ready to distort it and disobey. Nor would she have Adam to be her head. Now these "church women" seek to make Eve's act of rebellion their "banner" to bring the church into full "liberation" for women. These call Eve's act the "ferment of freedom." How true — but the freedom of bondage, the liberty of hell. Surely the child of God, realizing the spirit out of which arises the

"women's lib" movement within the churches, as portrayed in the above article, would not want to be associated with that at all.

Still, within the churches today, the cry — though not with the degree of godless mockery — is increasingly heard. Truly out of Eve's rebellion has arisen a similar rebellion against the God-ordained order. Some of this has been reported in *Calvinist Contact*, Dec. 9, 1983:

More than 200 women and men attended the Conference on Women in Church Office held on November 18, 19 at Calvin College. The theme of the conference was "Partners in the Gospel."

Sponsored by six Christian Reformed Churches who have or have had women in office and the Committee for Women in the Christian Reformed Church, the convention according to a brochure, was intended to "develop a sense of unity among local churches and church members committed to the full use of women's gifts."

... Friday evening keynote speaker Rev. Cleo Ludwick, RCA Chaplain at Pine Rest Christian Hospital, reflected on the difficulties she and her husband experienced when they faced changes in their relationship because of her desire to grow as a person ...

... The panel discussion that followed and that was entitled "The Church and the Process of Change" was started off by Dr. Louis Vos, Professor of Religion at Calvin College. He focused on theology and change.

Vos referred to Galileo's theory that the sun, not the earth, was the centre of our solar system. "In his days that was a theological question," said Vos. "We say it isn't."

Vos predicted that the same will be true of the question of women in office. "It will remain a theological issue as long as the church thinks it is a theological

issue. The time will come when the Church says, 'That is not the essence of the gospel'."

... (Kromminga) reminded the audience that in 1957 women were allowed to vote in Christian Reformed churches. The effects of change are slow in coming, but even when we resist change, we change," he said.

Kromminga got a delayed outburst of laughter when he ended his speech by saying, "The thought of change will make many of our present leaders turn in their grave ..."

... After the coffee break, a panel of 4 women church "officers" talked about their experiences. "Women on the Cutting Edge" was the theme.

Beverley Meyers, Adjunct Elder at the Hope CRC Oak Forest, Ill., told the gathering that her work was like that of an elder, except she was not ordained, she could not vote. She thought of her three years of service as "a very tranquil time" because she experienced much support. There was a good deal of opposition from Classis, however.

Judy Plekker, Associate Deacon at Calvin CRC, Grand Rapids, also has no vote and was not ordained ...

Jane Vander Haagen is a full-fledged deacon in the River Terrace CRC in East Lansing, Mich. She takes up collections, explains collections, offers prayer and is a full voting member of council ...

... (Rev. William Brink) said that he was not against women in office, but added, "we should not place our denomination in jeopardy ..."

It appears that today, more than ever, many "celebrate Eve's first free act." They have indeed drunk deeply of the "juice of the apple." But one can only cry: "Beware! Remember the consequences for Eve and Adam!"

Abortion on Demand

Bethany Christian Services of Grand Rapids, Mich. recently sent reminders to all of the local churches of the fact that on January 22, 1984 it will be 11 years since the United States Supreme Court issued a decision which declared abortion on demand legal in all 50 states.

That reminder was struck home forcefully to me when, shortly after, I heard news broadcasts telling the American people that for the first time in many, many years, two criminals had been executed in one week. Great stress was placed on the fact that two were killed. Many saw this as the beginning of

a bloodbath in this country — since more than 1,200 criminals are on "death-row," awaiting similar execution. One commentator asked if the American people could indeed allow such a terrible bloodbath. Remarks were made about the dehumanizing results of such executions. It was pointed out that we ought not to take life so lightly. Some even claimed that such executions were murder.

Then the announcement concerning abortions came back to me. It had stated, "The United States now has one of the most liberal abortion laws of all

the nations in the free world. 4,000 children lose their lives to abortion every day." And: "1.5 million children lose their lives to abortion every year — a modern day holocaust." If these figures are accurate, and I have every reason to believe they are, that would mean that about 16 million lives have been snuffed out during the past eleven years. That is like destroying the population of five cities the size of Chicago!

4,000 lives of babes who have violated no laws of

our land are taken away within one week without benefit of trial, without a lawyer defending their "rights" — while two criminals, guilty of terrible murder, duly tried and judged worthy of death, are slain within one week, creating in the process untold cries of horror and prophecies of doom. What does that tell of the age and country in which we live? There is truly the calling of "evil" to be "good," and "good" to be "evil." All this God will judge!

QUESTION BOX

The Unity in the Trinity

Rev. C. Hanko

A reader writes:

"I have a question that involves the trinity and prayer. In the Lord's prayer Jesus teaches His disciples to pray and to address God as "Our Father, which art in heaven." The Lord's prayer is a complete model prayer. We believe that when we do this we address not the first person of the trinity, but the true God. How must we understand that, seeing God is one in essence, yet three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Father is the Creator, the Son is our Savior, and the Holy Spirit sanctifies us. All three are co-eternal and co-essential. They are all equal and eternal. There is neither first nor last. We read concerning the Son in Colossians 1:18, 'And He is the head of the body; the church; who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence.' And in Philippians 2:6, 'Who, being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God.' Seeing Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all God, why did Jesus teach us to pray 'Our Father?' Why can we not pray to Jesus, our Lord and Savior, who always prays for us, and to the Holy Spirit? We always pray 'for Jesus' sake.' This is important and necessary. Why isn't this mentioned in the Lord's prayer?"

There are actually three questions here, which will have to be treated separately. In regard to the first: This question is very important, since there is much misunderstanding in regard to the unity of the three persons in the trinity and in their work. This misunderstanding actually dates back to a lack of clarity in our Confessions on this subject. In our Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 8, to which the reader refers, we read, "God the Father, and our

creation; . . . God the Son and our redemption, . . . God the Holy Ghost and our sanctification." The same distinction is made in the second paragraph of our Baptism Form.

Many attempts are made to defend this separation of the work of each person of the divine three. Some have said that the Father appears on the foreground in the work of creation, the Son in the work of redemption, and the Spirit in the work of sanctification. Others have said that *it appears to us* as if each person stands on the foreground in each particular work. The fact remains that this distinction is incorrect, for it separates the three persons and destroys their unity. We end up with three Gods instead of one.

It must be maintained that all three persons are active in all of God's works. A comparison of Genesis 1:1-3 with John, chapter 1, verses 1-3 shows us that all three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were active in creation. Also in the work of redemption the Father gave His Son as a sacrifice for us, the Son laid down His life, and the Holy Spirit, with whom Christ was anointed, sustained Him in His suffering. John 3:16 tells us that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. Likewise in the work of sanctification, God gives the Holy Spirit to Christ upon His exaltation, whom He, in turn, pours out into the church to perform all the work of our salvation in us and through us.

When Jesus teaches us to address God as our Father in heaven, He includes all three persons of the trinity. For the true God is the God and Father of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:3). Therefore,

when Christ addresses God as His Father He is praying, not to the first person in distinction from the other two, but is addressing the triune God. For example, the first word spoken on the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," was addressed to God triune in heaven, who also heard Him and laid our sins upon Him, so that this prayer was also answered, as was evident on Pentecost when three thousand were brought to repentance (Acts 2:39).

In this same sense the triune God is our Father in Christ Jesus. All the blessings of salvation come to us from Him in the Beloved, that is, through our Mediator Jesus Christ, by His indwelling Spirit, the Spirit of Christ that dwells in the church.

In close connection with the foregoing the reader asks, "Why can we not pray to Jesus, our Lord and Savior who always prays for us, and to the Holy Spirit?" There is, to the best of my knowledge, only one prayer in the New Testament addressed to Jesus as our exalted Lord in heaven. That is the well-known prayer of Revelation 22:17, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come." And again in verse 20: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." The very fact that, with this exception, we have no special prayers to the separate persons of the trinity must point out that we pray to God as triune God, whose works are eternally one in Him. Personally, I consider it very wrong to stress Jesus to children, as is so often done, leaving the impression that God is an austere Being to be feared, but Jesus is kind and gentle.

The third question reads, "We always pray 'for Jesus' sake'; this is important and necessary. Why isn't this mentioned in the Lord's prayer?"

This is possibly a bit more difficult, but must have passed through the minds of many of us. One reason why this is not included in the model prayer is probably because Jesus wanted to keep this prayer as brief and simple as possible. A weightier reason is that this was spoken earlier in Jesus' ministry, actually still in the old dispensation, before Jesus was exalted in heaven. At that early time the disciples could not have understood what it means to pray in Jesus' name. It was only at the time of Jesus' departure from the earth to ascend to the Father's right hand, that He spoke to them of the coming of the Holy Spirit and of His intercession in heaven. At that time Jesus emphasized this very strongly. In John 14:13, 14, "And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye ask anything in My name, I will do it." In chapter 15, the verses 7 and 10, there is a similar reference to asking in Jesus' name. And in chapter 16:23, 24 we are told, "And in that day ye shall ask Me nothing. Verily, verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." That this refers to Jesus' mediatorial intercession in the heavens is evident from Hebrews 4:15, 16: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in time of need." Likewise in Ephesians 2:18, "For in Him (Christ Jesus) we both (Jew and Gentile) have access by one Spirit unto the Father."

MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE

Our Order of Worship

Prof. H. Hanko

In our last article we concluded our discussion of the elements of the worship service which actually precede the worship proper: prayers before the service, the prayers in the Consistory room, the organ (or piano) prelude. In this article we begin a discussion of the worship proper and the various elements which go to make it up.

Before we enter into a discussion of each element, it might be well to consider various *orders* of

worship which have been followed in the past, especially in the Reformed tradition of the Calvin Reformation. If one studies these various orders of worship, it is quite surprising that, while they have differed rather widely from each other, they have, with few exceptions, included the same elements.

There is a word of instruction here which we do well to consider. A great deal of experimentation goes on in our day in the area of liturgical worship.

These changes, many of which are taking place even within Reformed churches, assume many different forms. Sometimes worship services themselves are discarded or replaced by special programs, special speakers, dramatic productions, liturgical dances, or films and movies. Sometimes, the outward form of the worship service is preserved, but the whole of the order of worship is changed. Various elements are added to make the worship more liturgical or to add some "sparkle" to what is considered drab and colorless. This happens, e.g., with the introduction of choirs and special musical numbers into the worship. Sometimes various elements are taken out in the interests of mere change or to shorten the worship. Sometimes such complete alterations are made that one can scarcely recognize that one is in a service where the church of Christ worships her God.

It is interesting, therefore, to consider the fact that the order of worship as practiced in our churches has a long and illustrious history, that it was formulated with a view to keeping the worship of the church as near to Scripture as possible, but that it also leaves room for that liberty which Scripture itself gives us. We are, in our worship, in good company.

That we may have an idea of some of the orders of worship set up by those in the Reformed tradition, we will include in this article a few samples. Notice how they all, while differing in details, agree in the essential elements.

The first one to practice a genuinely Calvinistic order of worship was Calvin himself. He developed an order of worship while he was in Strassburg, and believed that it was based upon Scripture. It was as follows:

- The Votum
- Confession of sin
- Absolution
- The reading of the Decalogue
- A form prayer which closed this part of the liturgy
- A prayer for the sermon ending in the Lord's prayer
- The sermon
- A prayer of thanks to God and for the needs of Christendom
- The creed
- The blessing.

Calvin also introduced into the worship the singing of the Psalms; and special versifications of and music for the Psalms were prepared for the use of the people of God.

A. Lasco, one of the great liturgists in the Reformed tradition, divided the order of worship into an objective part and a subjective part. That is, he

divided the order of worship in such a way that the participation of the congregation in various liturgical actions was separated from the role of the minister. Generally speaking, he preferred to have the objective part first, although he allowed for some variations in the order. His order was as follows:

Objective part.

- The reading of the law
- The confession of sin
- Absolution
- The creed
- Prayer, ending with the Lord's prayer
- Collection
- Blessing

Subjective part.

- Form prayer
- Song
- Scripture reading
- Sermon
- Prayer.

Dathenus, another great figure in the history of Reformed liturgy, had the following order:

Votum

The law — read or sung

Form prayer for:

- Confession of sin
- Prayer for the minister and the preaching
- The law
- Creed

Sermon

Prayer for the needs of Christendom

Aaronitic blessing.

Dr. A. Kuyper also divided the order of worship into an objective and subjective part.

Objective part:

- Votum
- Benediction
- Confession of sin
- Absolution
- Creed
- Announcement of text
- Psalm

Subjective part:

- Prayer
- Scripture reading
- Sermon

Prayer:

- Of thanks and for the needs of Christendom
- The law
- The blessing.

There are one or two remarks about these various orders of worship which are worth making. In the first place, it is interesting to note that each one contains a "confession of sin" and three of them have an "absolution." The idea here is not that of the Roman Catholic Church, with its "confessional" and absolution by the priest, who has claimed

for himself the right to forgive sins. The idea is rather that the people of God are required to come before God in worship in true humility. And this humility does not only arise from the fact that God's people are mere creatures before the face of the Creator of heaven and earth — all nations are before Him as the dust of the balance and less than a drop of a bucket — but it arises also from the consciousness of great sin and unworthiness. We have, in ourselves, no right to come before God, for we are sinful and guilt-burdened. Our only right is in Christ Jesus our Lord. It is in this consciousness that the child of God comes before God, and it is this which makes his coming an act of humility.

Scripture often emphasizes this truth also. How often did not the prophets castigate Israel for mere outward worship, lip-service, while their hearts were far from God. Again and again God reminded His people that a broken spirit and a contrite heart was what was pleasing to Him. If they were to appear before Him properly, they had to come with deep and profound sorrow of heart that they had offended God with their sins.

But following upon this confession of sin comes the blessedness of forgiveness and the assurance of mercy and pardon in the blood of Jesus Christ. When God's people experience that pardon of sin by faith in Christ and receive the assurance that they are, in their blessed Savior, worthy to stand before God, then also they can worship in the confidence that God will receive them and their worship and come to dwell with them.

These ideas were emphasized by our fathers when they included these elements in the order of worship. In the order of worship in our churches we do not have such a separate element, and this is perhaps a mistake. Nevertheless, this consciousness ought to be present in God's people when they appear before God, and it certainly ought to be a part of the congregational prayers if it is not made a separate element. It would, I think, be well to consider seriously including some such separate element in our order of worship.

Secondly, it is interesting to note that all the orders of worship referred to above included a "prayer for the needs of Christendom." This also is important. Perhaps in our order of worship this is best included in the congregational prayer. But at any rate, it is crucial that this be not forgotten. So often it is true that the minister, when he leads in prayer, limits his prayers to the congregation of which he is pastor. He prays for that congregation, brings the needs of that congregation before the throne of grace, prays for those in the congregation who are sick or dying, who are in special need because of the heavy hand of the Lord upon them — and all this is good; but he forgets to include in his prayers the needs of any of the saints outside his own flock. This is an intolerable omission. He ought to pray for all the sister congregations with which his congregation dwells in fellowship within the communion of the churches of the denomination; but he ought also to pray for the whole of the church of Christ throughout the world.

This is so important because of the fact that one congregation is not alone in the world and is not, by itself, the body of Christ. The saints worship in the communion of all the church, in living fellowship with all the church of all ages, but also living on the earth at any given time. We are one in the body of Christ, united with all the saints from every nation and tribe and tongue. We are a part of a church which is truly catholic — as we confess: "I believe in an holy, catholic Church." To fail to pray for the needs of the whole church of Christ is a narrow parochialism, a spiritual self-centeredness which is inexcusable.

For the rest, while the order is somewhat different, the main elements are all there.

Within the freedom of the Scriptures themselves, therefore, and the variations which are possible within that freedom, we have the assurance that our worship and its order stand in the solid tradition of the Reformed faith. The liturgical experimentation which goes on today ought to be abhorred.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

Loved as an Enemy of God

Rev. John A. Heys

Note: The article which appeared in this rubric on February 1, entitled "A Tragically Worthless Success," should have come after this article. Our

apologies to our readers, and especially to Rev. Heys, for this disruption in the sequence of articles in this series.

There are many reasons why people "fall in love." A man may fall in love with a pretty face, and fall in love at first sight. A woman's soul may be stirred by athletic prowess, fleshly charisma, and she may quickly fall in love with one of the world's heroes. Beauty, it is said, is in the beholder's eye. That being the case, what is attractive to one may be utterly unattractive to another. What is beautiful to one may cause another to question the eyesight of his neighbor.

But tragic it is in the church when a woman is loved because she shows enmity towards the living God. Disappointing, but also pathetic, it is when a young man falls in love with a young woman who charms him because of her worldly, unsanctified walk of life. The world sees the beauty that God gives the daughters of Zion; and there is nothing strange about it when the world desires to get acquainted with these daughters, to date them and establish friendly relationships with them. Neither is it strange that the young men in the church see the physical beauty of the women in the world. But both the young women and the young men in the church have one powerful weapon to fend off and keep away the unbelieving men and women of the world. Let them display their faith in God. Let them show a walk of love toward the living God; and the world has no interest in them any more. Sad to say, this weapon is not used; and young women and young men in the church end up with a life wherein, if indeed they are children of God, they are greatly hindered in their walk of faith with a life's mate that will not help them in their spiritual life and cannot comfort them in their trials and afflictions.

The world will love you, if you will only walk as they do in a life that shows no love toward God. And how serious and important it is to emulate the psalmist who in Psalm 119:63 writes, "I am a companion of all them that fear Thee and of them that keep Thy commandments." How necessary that we heed what Paul wrote in II Corinthians 6:14-17: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you." And Jesus gave the rule in His sermon on the kingdom: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and its righteousness" (Matthew 6:33). If we do not

see the kingdom of God in a person, we must not seek that one's hand in marriage! The all-controlling thing to find in a life's mate is faith in God, righteousness, a love of God and His kingdom.

THAT Esther did not do, and THAT Mordecai did not want her to do! As I pointed out last time, she was commanded not to show in any way at any time any faith in God, or love of righteousness. And Esther willingly went along and kept Mordecai's command without complaint or objection of any kind. Mordecai's command, not God's, was her rule for life. Being yoked to a godless man, living a life of adultery with him, throwing away the first table of His law, as well as the second table thereof, she went after that which would give joy and pleasure to her flesh. She, as well as Mordecai, was not doing all this in the interest of God's church, but for self and for the nation of Israel. Not the church of God which was in the nation of Israel at that time concerned her, but the nation of Israel at the expense of the faith and life of the church in the nation. Not the kingdom of God and its righteousness came first in her life, but the fleshly seed of Abraham. She pushed all the things of the kingdom of God aside, and this she did in order to conquer the world, to be the wife of a godless king, and to be queen in a world power. Do not say that she and Mordecai were looking far ahead and for influence to get Israel back into the land of Canaan. Israel had returned already. Make her a heroine of faith — like those in Hebrews 11 — but why did not the Spirit move the author of this epistle to include her then in the list? Besides, can you find anywhere in Scripture, or in church history, that a person hid his or her faith in order to further the cause of Christ? Is it not always the other way? Does one not exactly fight with spiritual weapons to protect and defend the church? Come! Come! Let the Word of God, that deliberately shows us that neither Esther nor Mordecai used God's name in — as we hope to point out later in this series — times when it had to be mentioned, and reveals unbelief when it is omitted, explain Esther's actions.

Yes, Esther was a submissive daughter. And that is amazing for such an earthly beauty. She obeyed Mordecai before this beauty contest. Now that she is queen, we find in later chapters, she again obeys him. She not only kept his commandment not to reveal that she belonged to a nation that feared Jehovah, the one and only true God, but also when he insisted on it that she go in to speak to the king.

Now women with exceptional beauty in the world are almost always vain and proud. They seek to get their way by virtue of their beauty. They use their beauty as a power over men. And having later on also attained to the place of power and honour, by being chosen by the king, Esther still submits to

Mordecai. Not once do we read that she sent servants to go out and to tell him to leave her alone or else

We also read in verse 15 that she submitted to Hege. This was, of course, for her own good. It was not to keep the fifth commandment in its basic meaning of honoring all in authority. Hege knew the king better than she did. And to win the contest she had better get the best help that she could. Materialistic goals drove her to this, not spiritual considerations. She was wise enough in the ways of the world not to say to Hege, "I'll do it my way. I'll beguile him by my beauty." No, she submitted because there was so much at stake as far as the things of this world were concerned.

All this submissiveness, however, was not pleasing in God's sight. It was not in His eyes seeking the kingdom of God and its righteousness. If you have a wicked goal, you cannot properly use righteous means. If your motive is carnal, you cannot use the things of God's kingdom properly to get that for which your flesh craves. And certainly failure to use spiritual weapons and to confess the God of heaven and earth will never make a wicked motive right in God's sight.

The whole point is that Esther did not submit to God! How could she be submitting to God by denying Him? We read in Isaiah 43:21, "This people have I formed for myself, they shall show forth my praise." And in I Peter 2:9 we have the same idea. The believers are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people, an holy nation that is brought into being to show forth the praises of Him Who called them out of darkness into His marvelous light. And you cannot do that by not using His name. You will fail in that glorious work when you fail to show that you are His people, as Esther at Mordecai's command failed to do. The question is not whether a work looks good to man, or outwardly resembles a work performed by a believer. The question is whether it looks good to God Who reads the heart.

And to fail to show love toward God is an act of hatred towards Him. Failure to confess Him is to deny Him. And to deceive men, by keeping back an important truth that they must know, is walking contrary to God's law, and thus is performing an act of hatred against Him.

Esther was loved because she walked in hatred against God. And if you disagree with this, come with something, just one thing in the book that does display one act of faith. Show where she stood up for the cause of God. Point out a passage that teaches that she showed forth the praises of God. Show where she even attempts to fight for God's cause and to oppose sin and the lie. A Christian,

and an Old Testament believer, cannot condone evil, keep silent when unbelievers ascribe God's praises to idols.

Let us beware lest we fall in love with Esther who showed nothing but hatred against God. There is nothing in her life, as presented in this book, that any believing parent would want to recommend to his child. There is so much in her life that a sincere, covenant parent would want to warn his children against, as we hope to see.

Jesus said it, "If a man love Me, he will keep My words" (John 14:23). And John wrote it in I John 5:3, "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." Did Esther do that? Is there in the whole book one work of love toward God recorded?

As already pointed out, had she shown one work of love to God, she would not have found favour in the eyes of the keeper of the women. Had she showed this when she was ushered in before the king that night, when she was put to the test by this ungodly king, he would have driven her away. He was not looking for faith in her. He was not interviewing her so that he could be told what Jehovah said about putting away a wife, and about adultery being the only reason Moses gave (not God) for the Israelites to live separately, if adultery bothered the one mate so much that living with the other was psychologically impossible. He was not ready to hear God's law proclaimed; and had she begun to witness of Jehovah, she would have been driven out before she got very far. Jesus said that, "If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you" (John 15:20). Had Esther revealed Christ during those months of preparation, and then before the king, she would have been persecuted, not chosen to be queen.

But no, she manifested herself as one of the world. She walked as one who hated Jehovah and bowed before the king's idols. Such the king can and did love. And she was loved as one who is an enemy of God.

How could it be otherwise? For she was loved and chosen by an enemy of God to be his wife. And enemies of God can only choose and love those who are enemies of God. One who hates God cannot love one who loves God. Do not take my word for it. Listen to what the Holy Spirit says about this in that passage I quoted from II Corinthians 6. There through Paul He states unequivocally that righteousness has no fellowship with unrighteousness; light has no communion with darkness; Christ has no concord with Belial; the temple of God has no agreement with idols; and the believer has no part with infidels. The opposite is therefore also true that the unrighteous, darkness, Belial, the

infidel, and idols want nothing to do with the righteousness, spiritual light, Christ, believers, and the temple of God.

And since Esther did seek *close* fellowship, communion, concord, and an *intimate* part with this infidel, who was a friend of Belial and full of unrighteousness and spiritual darkness, she is revealed in Scripture to be an unbeliever. There is a reason why not one positive act of faith in God is related concerning her. Listen to what God says; but take note also of what He omits and yet speaks volumes about this beautiful but wicked descendant of Abraham.

FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

The Nicene Creed

Rev. James Slopsema

Article 5 — And the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures;

The wording of this particular article is evidently taken from I Corinthians 15:3, 4: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures."

There was an element in the church of Corinth that denied the resurrection of the dead. Their claim was that the dead rise not. This they applied specifically to the saints who had departed in death. To counter this dreadful error, Paul set about to establish the fact of Christ's resurrection. If Christ be risen from the dead, how can it be said that the dead rise not? In the first part of chapter 15 Paul establishes the fact of Christ's resurrection. In verse 4 he does this by reminding the saints that the resurrection of Christ is according to the Scriptures. That is, the resurrection of Christ was prophesied even in the O.T. Scriptures. The resurrection therefore was not some fabrication of recent date.

By alluding to this passage the early church also sought in the Nicene Creed to establish the fact of Christ's resurrection. For there were those even then who were denying the resurrection of Christ.

There were those first who were promoting the falsehood or fraud theory of Jesus' resurrection. According to this theory the disciples had stolen away the body of Jesus from the sepulchre while the Roman soldiers slept, and later claimed that He had risen. This idea had first been set forth by the Jewish leaders at the time of the resurrection. With them of course it had been a deliberate lie. The soldiers upon seeing the angel descend from heaven had come trembling with fear to the leaders of the Jews telling all they had seen. And the leaders had bribed the soldiers into saying that the dis-

ciples had stolen the body while they slept (cf. Matt. 28:11-15). According to Matthew 28:15 this explanation was commonly received among the Jews even till the time of the writing of the Gospel of Matthew which was about 35 years after the resurrection. We learn from other sources that this erroneous idea continued on even after that. It was found among the Jews even in the middle of the second century at the time of the church father Justin Martyr. This same idea was also propounded by the noted pagan philosopher Celsus, who was a chief opponent of the Christian faith in the middle of the second century.

It is rather interesting that this same falsehood theory was later revived in the eighteenth century and is still widely accepted today. In fact, a new twist was even added to this theory by Salvador, a French Jew. According to Salvador, Jesus was saved from crucifixion by the wife of Pontius Pilate with the cooperation of Joseph of Arimathea or some Galilean women. Thereupon Jesus retired to the desert to live among the sect of the Essenes, appearing later on to a few of His disciples in secret.

Another theory that arose during the second century was the swoon theory. According to this theory Jesus never died on the cross. He merely went into a swoon or deep faint. On the assumption that He was dead, Jesus was placed in the sepulchre of Joseph of Arimathea only to revive sometime before the third day and claim to be risen. This theory also was later revived at the beginning of the nineteenth century and is still held by some today.

Finally there was the vision or hallucination theory. This theory concentrates especially on the special appearances of Jesus after His resurrection and which served to convince the church at that time of the reality of Jesus' resurrection. According to the vision theory Jesus never did appear to any of

His disciples. The disciples merely imagined they saw Jesus. After Jesus' death on the cross the disciples eagerly looked for and longed for the resurrection of their Lord. And in this particular case the wish for the resurrection became the father of the belief that He had risen. In fact, so strong was this belief that soon various disciples reported they had seen Him. But these "appearances" were merely hallucinations brought about by the misguided zeal of the disciples.

This theory was invented by the pagan philosopher Celsus in the second century who, we saw, also advanced the falsehood theory. And these two theories are quite easily combined. Not all the disciples were involved in the attempt to deceive others into believing that Jesus had risen. Only some stole the body and then proceeded to convince others of the disciples that Jesus had risen. And those who had been so duped in turn began in their exuberance to hallucinate, seeing visions of their risen Savior. Also the hallucination theory, after being buried out of sight for centuries, arose to new life in the nineteenth century and gained a great deal of credence in the church world. And even today there are many in the church who will explain the appearances of Jesus in the Gospel accounts in this manner.

Over against the widespread denial of the resurrection of Jesus the early church in this fifth article of her creed confessed that Jesus has in fact risen from the dead. And she did so on the basis of the Scriptures. For she confessed that Jesus rose again "according to the Scriptures."

Now it is not that difficult to demonstrate the absurdity of the three theories dreamed up to deny the reality of Jesus' resurrection.

Take for example the falsehood theory. How, in the first place, can anyone verify this theory that the disciples stole the body of Jesus and claimed a resurrection. As this theory started, the disciples stole the body of Jesus while the guards slept. Who then saw them steal the body? The soldiers didn't. They were sleeping! Besides, this theory is preposterous in light of other facts. Consider for example the faint-heartedness of the disciples. At Jesus' arrest and trial they all fled. On Easter Sunday they were all huddled in an upper room, doors and windows barred, for fear of their lives. Does this sound like a group capable of stealing the body of Jesus from under the noses of Roman guards and then convincing others that He had in fact risen? How absurd! Besides, many of these same disciples charged with this deception later suffered martyrdom for their belief in Jesus' resurrection. Does one willingly give his life for the sake of what he knows to be a deliberate lie?

The same can be shown in connection with the swoon theory. Is it really plausible that the Roman soldiers attending the crucifixion of Jesus, who were professional executioners, could not tell the difference between death and a deep faint? And could it be possible that Jesus, after having gone into a deep faint and suffering a spear thrust to the side as well, could then within 48 hours revive, somehow sneak away from the sepulchre and walk all the way to Emmaus with two of His disciples (cf. Luke 24:13ff.)?

The hallucination theory is no less absurd. It is certainly plausible that a person so desperately wants to see something that he actually imagines he sees it. This has happened before. However, it is quite absurd to imagine that large numbers of people will have the same hallucination at the same time. But this is what must be claimed with the hallucination theory of Jesus' resurrection. For according to the witness of the Scriptures Jesus appeared to as many as 500 of His followers on one occasion (cf. I Cor. 15:5, 6).

However, the early church didn't answer the opponents of the resurrection by pointing out the absurdities of these theories. She rather answered them by pointing to the Scriptures. Jesus rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. By the Scriptures the early church evidently meant the O.T. Scriptures, the point being that the resurrection had been prophesied centuries before the birth of Jesus.

The O.T. Scriptures certainly do speak of the resurrection of Christ. So much is this the case that Christ Himself spent quite a while on Easter afternoon expounding to the two travelers to Emmaus from the O.T. Scriptures that He had to suffer the shame of the cross and thus enter into glory (cf. Luke 24:25, 26). And this certainly implies the resurrection. In like manner Paul in Thessalonica reasoned for three sabbath days out of the O.T. Scriptures that "Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead" (cf. Acts 17:1-3). In fact, before King Agrippa Paul summarized his whole ministry as an Apostle as "witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles" (cf. Acts 26:22, 23).

And if we turn to the O.T. Scriptures we can indeed find the resurrection of Christ. It is not our intention to cite all these passages, but to mention just a few. The resurrection of Christ is directly referred to in such passages as Isaiah 53:10-12 and Psalm 16:10. The resurrection is furthermore

typically represented in certain O.T. events, as God sparing Isaac from being sacrificed by his father Abraham (cf. Hebrews 11:19) and Jonah in the belly of the fish for three days (cf. Matt. 12:40). Furthermore, the resurrection of Christ is definitely implied in those passages which speak of the eternal glory that God has for the Promised Christ. This is especially true if we view these passages in light of the prophecies that speak of Christ's suffering and death. How can the Christ of God, Who must suffer many things, even death, enjoy the glorious exaltation spoken of in the O.T. without a resurrection from the dead? Confer such passages as II Samuel 7:12-17, Psalm 2, and Psalm 110.

Certainly the prophecies of the O.T. Scriptures concerning the resurrection serve to verify the witness of the N.T. Scriptures that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead. How can anyone claim that Jesus' resurrection was really only a fraud perpetrated by

the disciples, or a hallucination suffered by those overwrought by the death of their Master, or no fact at all because Jesus never died on the cross — how can these claims be made in light of the fact that the resurrection had been prophesied centuries before in the Scriptures? Certainly the true believer accepts at face value all that he finds in the N.T. Scriptures concerning the resurrection. And therefore he has no time at all for all the theories to explain away the resurrection. Nevertheless his faith in the resurrection is confirmed by the prophecies of the O.T. Scriptures concerning Christ's resurrection. And these O.T. prophecies also mercilessly destroy every argument of the unbeliever as he seeks to destroy the resurrection.

Hence, with the early Christian church, and over against the same enemy of the truth that the early church faced, we confess "and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures."

THE LORD GAVE THE WORD

Missionary Methods (22)

(The Views of Rufus Anderson)

Prof. Robert D. Decker

The Rev. Rufus Anderson (1796-1880), an ordained Congregational minister, was secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions from 1832 to 1866. Prior to this he served for fourteen years as assistant secretary to this board, and after his term in office he continued as an advisor to the board almost until his death. He was both a contemporary and friend of Henry Venn. His views and especially his "three self" formula influenced American missions until the end of World War II. (Cf. Rufus Anderson, R. Pierce Beaver, ed.; *To Advance the Gospel*, Eerdmans, p. 10.) The fundamental principle of Anderson's views on missions is this: the aim or goal of mission work must be the gathering of indigenous churches which are self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating. We are convinced that if this "three self" formula be understood in biblical terms it remains the correct method of doing mission work. As we examine some of his writings we shall find that Anderson has a great deal to say which is profitable for our own Protestant Reformed mission work. He also is in agreement fundamentally with both John Nevius and Henry Venn.

In Anderson's day there was considerable discussion and disagreement concerning the proper aim of missions. The disagreement centered on two words: evangelization and civilization. The former referred to the simple preaching and teaching of the gospel and the latter to a transformation of heathen society. While there was some argument as to which should have the priority it was generally agreed that the two were complementary. Faith and repentance by means of the preaching of the gospel always brought to the heathen (non-European, non-American) the desire to attain "Christian," i.e., European-American civilization. Likewise it was believed that if civilization were stressed in initial contacts with the heathen it produced understanding and acceptance of the gospel. Anderson believed that "the civilization which the gospel has conferred upon our own New England is the highest and best, in a religious point of view, the world has yet seen" (Beaver, *To Advance the Gospel*, p. 73). He was also convinced that it was seriously wrong to make the transformation of society the aim of missions. This might come after a long period of time as a by-product of the preaching of the gospel, but it must not be the goal of mis-

sions. In a sermon which he preached (Oct. 23, 1845) at the ordination of a missionary, Anderson said, "For the Christian religion is identified in all our conceptions of it from our earliest years, with the almost universal diffusion among its professors of the blessings of education, industry, civil liberty, family government, social order, the means of a respectable livelihood, and a well ordered community. Hence *our* idea of piety in converts among the heathen very generally involves the acquisition and possession, to a great extent, of these blessings; and *our* idea of the propagation of the gospel by means of missions, is, to an equal extent, *the creation among heathen tribes and nations of a highly improved state of society, such as we ourselves enjoy*. And for this vast intellectual, moral and social transformation we allow but a short time. We expect the first generation of converts to Christianity, even among savages, to come into all our fundamental ideas of morals, manners, political economy, social organization, right, justice, equity; although many of these are ideas which our own community has been ages in acquiring. If we discover that converts under the torrid zone go but half clothed, that they are idle on a soil where a small amount of labor will supply their wants, that they sometimes forget the apostle's cautions to his converts, not to lie one to another, and to steal no more, in communities where the grossest vice scarcely affects the reputation, and that they are slow to adopt our ideas of rights of man; we at once doubt the genuineness of their conversion, and the faithfulness of their missionary instructors" (Beaver, p. 74). Anderson warns: "Unless this influence is guarded against by missionaries and their directors, the result is that the missions have a *two-fold object of pursuit*; the one, that simple and sublime spiritual object of the ambassador for Christ mentioned in the text, 'persuading men to be reconciled to God;' (II Cor. 5:20, R.D.D.) the other, the reorganizing, by various direct means, of the structure of that social system, of which the converts form a part. Thus the object of the missions becomes more or less complicated, leading to a complicated, burdensome, and perhaps expensive course of measures for its attainment. I may be allowed, therefore, to invite attention to what is conceived to be *our true and only office and work in missions to the heathen*. 'Now then we are ambassadors for Christ; as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.'" (Beaver, pp. 74, 75; emphasis in the above quotations is Anderson's.)

The point Anderson is making is twofold: 1) The singular task of missions is to preach the gospel among the heathen in order that by this means and only this means Christ may gather the elect into the fellowship of His Body, the church. 2) In this work

neither the missionary nor the church which sends him must expect the heathen among which he works to conform to the life-style and culture, the "civilization" of his own people. This transformation may very well come, at least to a certain extent, over a long period of time, but it must not be the object of the missionary's work nor the expectation of the church which sends him in the name of Christ.

Anderson's point, made over one hundred years ago, is well taken. We must not expect those people to whom we send our Foreign Missionaries to become like us culturally, politically, socially, etc. To be sure, all Christians, all new converts must not be conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of their minds (Romans 12:2). All Christians, regardless of their race, culture, or level of civilization must live in harmony with the will of God revealed in Holy Scripture. There are not two standards of right and wrong: one for the home church and the other for the mission field. But it must be remembered that the sole aim of missions is to preach the gospel to the nations in order that the elect may be gathered into the church, a witness may be left, and the end of all things may come (Matthew 24:14). It is not the business of the church through its missionaries to attempt to transform the society of the people among whom it preaches. Nor must the church expect to see such transformation occur within two or three or four years of labor. Let us be specific. We must not expect the Jamaicans among whom the Lord has given us an open door to become like us. They are not white. They are not "middle class." They are not Dutch-Americans. They are black, poor, and Jamaican. Nothing is going to change that. Preaching the gospel to them is not going to change that. We must recognize this. We must also recognize that God has His people in every nation under heaven, Jamaica too! The same is true of any mission field. The brothers and sisters in Singapore are educated, articulate, industrious, and in many ways like us. But they too are of a different race and culture. We must not attempt to change that.

The result of failing to recognize this may very well be as Anderson said: "... the missions have a two-fold object of pursuit; the one ... persuading men to be reconciled to God; the other, the reorganizing, by various direct means, of the structure of that social system, of which the converts form a part. Thus the object of the missions becomes more or less complicated, leading to a complicated, burdensome, and perhaps expensive course of measures for its attainment" (Beaver, pp. 74, 75). Another result is possible and this is that no work at all is done among people who are very much different from us. Because people live in very primitive

huts and worship in equally primitive church buildings; because people do not live in suburban English colonials and walkout ranches or high rise apartments; because people eke out a simple living and do not wear three-piece suits to an office; these are not reasons for not sending them missionaries. These and other similar factors must not be the criteria by which we judge a field to be a viable mission. We must listen to and learn from men like Nevius, Venn, and Anderson. They and others with them are pioneers in missions. Long before we were born they faced and dealt with many of the same problems we face today. It is interesting to note in this connection that some twelve hundred

missionaries were ordained and sent to various parts of the world (Africa, India, Jamaica, *et. al.*) during Anderson's tenure with the American Board.

Wherever Christ opens the doors and provides the means, let us send missionaries. Let these missionaries preach Christ crucified and nothing else. Let them call all peoples to repentance and faith in order that through the power of the Holy Spirit the elect may call upon the Lord and be saved, and in order that all unbelievers may stand condemned. Let this be our aim in all our mission work. This is the biblical way.

IN HIS FEAR

God Is a Spirit (continued)

Rev. Ronald Hanko

Just as God's self-revelation in the First Commandment teaches us that we must "have" Him alone as our God to worship and serve in all our thoughts, words, and deeds, so also God's revelation of Himself in the Second Commandment teaches us *how* we must worship Him. From the examples of Cain and Uzzah we have seen the importance of understanding and keeping the Second Commandment, and to those examples we might add that of the two sons of Aaron (Lev. 10:1-7). The manner of our worship is so serious, a matter of life and death, exactly because it is God Who must be worshiped. And the Second Commandment reveals Him to us in all His infinite and transcendent glory as the One Who dwells in unapproachable light, a Spirit Who is not and cannot be seen by the creature.

It is in harmony with this revelation of God that the Second Commandment forbids the use of images in the worship of God. It does not forbid images, pictures, statues, or other figures as such, either in art or for other purposes, but it forbids any representation of God or the likeness of any creature which is to be used in worshiping God, as the Israelites used the likeness of a calf to worship Him. That images themselves are not wrong is obvious from one look at Solomon's temple, which was covered on the inside with graven figures of cherubim, palm trees, and flowers, and which had in it the ark of the covenant crowned with two great images of cherubim (I Kings 6:23-29).

It is important that we remember this. The Roman Catholic Church, for example, claims (though this is a lie) that it does not actually teach the people to worship its numerous pictures, statues, and other images, and even claims (and this too is a lie) to offer a different kind of worship to the saints and to Mary and to the angels, but insists that all these things are only a means to worship God Himself. Nevertheless, they grossly transgress the Second Commandment and trample underfoot the glory of the invisible God.

Even greater than Rome's shame, however, is the shame of those Protestant churches who have once again adopted these Romish practices. Many pictures in Protestant churches and Bibles violate this Commandment, especially when they represent one of the Persons of the Holy Trinity, and when they are used to teach God's people the glory of God. I have seen in quite a number of Protestant churches, for example, images of God the Holy Spirit in which He is represented by a dove. Not only is this in direct violation of the Second Commandment, but it is not even in harmony with Scripture which compares His *descent* at the baptism of Jesus and not His *Person* to a dove. The Holy Spirit also is the One True God, Whose glory is unsearchable, and He may neither be represented nor worshiped by means of an image.

Something not so clearly understood is the question concerning pictures of Jesus. The argument is

that we can make pictures of Him because He took upon Himself our human nature. We may not forget, though, that His human nature is inseparably united to the divine, and now glorified besides, so that all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in Him (Col. 2:9). Thus a picture in which we see only His human nature, even if it is accurately represented, is a lie, and perpetuates the great lie of apostate Christianity, which glorifies the humanity of Christ at the expense of His divinity. Furthermore, what picture can ever show us that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself" (II Cor. 5:19)? And it is a fact that all the pictures of Christ commonly displayed present such a Christ of man's imagination, in Whom is found only love and tenderness, and none of the fierce, burning wrath of God against sins. Even the cross is deprived of its glory and its power by such representations and becomes only an object of sympathy and sentiment, rather than of deepest shame and humiliation. So awful was the mystery of His suffering and death that even the event itself was hidden from human eyes in a cloak of darkness. That, then, is the reason why Jesus emphasizes again and again in John 14-16 that it is the Spirit, and He alone, Who teaches us all things concerning Christ, our Lord.

Nor may we forget that "graven" images are not the only kind of images that we can make. The Second Commandment forbids all visible and tactile images and pictures in the worship of God, but it also forbids all mental images of God — the kind of images we carry and hide in our hearts. In Acts 17, after Paul has declared the glory of God as One Who does not dwell in temples made with hands and Who is not worshiped with men's hands, he also reminds the Athenians and us that we ought not even "to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device" (vss. 24-29). So also the Psalmist prays in harmony with the great glory of God and the Second Commandment when he asks, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer" (Ps. 19:14).

It is in this connection that we are able to see that, fundamentally, all false doctrine is a violation of the Second Commandment, for it sets up an image of the great Creator and worships and says, "These be thy gods, O Israel." A god who loves all men or who is gracious to the reprobate, or who is dependent on the will of the sinner, is an image of man's devising, when it is claimed that such a god is the God of Heaven.

We make these images ourselves when we in our foolishness imagine that God does not see or deal with our sins, or when we come to Him and wor-

ship Him only in times of great trouble as though in all His glory He exists only for our benefit. When we are beset by doubts and fears, then we have "graven" an image of God as one who is weak and helpless and whose arm is short. When we complain of our afflictions and trials, then we have forgotten the transcendent glory of God as the One Who governs and controls all things and turns them to our advantage. Even when we seek to worship God in the company of saints and in the presence of Christ without putting away all malice and envy and evil-speaking against our brethren, then we are worshiping according to our own imaginations and not according to God's revelation of His glory in Scripture.

Here too we see the close connection that exists between image worship and idolatry. Image worship is always the beginning of idolatry, for just as the "Whom" of our worship determines the "how," so also the "how" has a profound effect upon the "Whom." When we set up images of Jehovah then we not only set aside the proper worship of Jehovah, but we have begun to set aside God Himself. That is clear from the example of Jeroboam. He led the Ten Tribes into the sin of image worship because he himself had already set aside God in his own heart. But it was not long before Israel had also done the same and had begun to worship other gods, notably the idol Baal, god of the Sidonians (compare I Kings 12:25-33 and 16:29-33). The same is true of Jehu. Jehu, though he destroyed the worship of Baal, sowed the wind in Israel when he continued in the sin of Jeroboam, and in the days of Hosea, four generations later, Israel once again began to reap the whirlwind of God's wrath for her worship of Baal (cf. II Kings 10:29-31, 17:6-18, and Hosea 2:13).

This too stands as a warning to us. These sins must be confessed and repented lest we find that we are no longer worshiping the God of heaven at all, but altogether another god. Then we too shall come under the fierce wrath of Jehovah of Hosts.

The positive requirement of the Second Commandment is found in John 4:24: "They that worship God must worship Him in Spirit and in truth." This is found in the context of the question of the Samaritan woman concerning the worship of her people. They did not worship God in Jerusalem according to the regulations of the Law, but on their own Mount Gerizim. It is striking that Jesus not only told her that she and her people worshiped in the wrong place, but He cited this as the evidence that they did not even know whom they worshiped (vs. 22).

Thus Jesus instructs her and us concerning the proper manner of worshiping God when He says

"in spirit" and "in truth." To worship "in spirit" means that our worship must be spiritual and not carnal. Even in our worship and in all its parts there must be a tacit acknowledgement that our God is not as the gods of the heathen, and that His glory is so great that He must be worshiped in an entirely different way than such gods. And in refraining from the use of images we do confess this. Always in teaching we find that "a picture is worth a thousand words," except in teaching the knowledge of God; and that in itself sets the knowledge of God far above all other knowledge before our own minds and before the minds of our children.

To worship "in spirit" is to worship God not through what we can see or touch, but through our spirits as they are moved and directed by the Spirit of God. That worship is a worship of faith (Heb. 11:6), and of humility (James 5:10), which is offered only in the way of repentance, that is, with a broken spirit and a contrite heart (Ps. 51:16, 17). Such a worship is full of true spiritual joy (Luke 1:47), and is brought willingly and obediently (Ex. 35:21).

But a worship which is "in spirit" is also of necessity a worship that is "in truth." This is only to say, first of all, that there is but one standard for our worship, and that is the Word of God in the Scriptures. The Word of God alone tells us what belongs in our worship, and all else is excluded. In the Old Testament this was laid out in great detail, so that, as Jesus reminded the woman at Jacob's well, even the place of worship was prescribed. In the New Testament there is much more freedom, but we still may not think that we have license to worship as we please. Now also we are bound by the regulations of the Word as given in the teaching and examples of our Lord and His Apostles. And, as we have seen, those regulations are not arbitrary, but founded in God's revelation of Himself as the transcendently glorious God.

That we worship in truth means also that the Word of God is the content of worship. Thus it is the preaching, though despised, must continue to have the central place in the worship of the church.

To replace the preaching with various forms of entertainment is to deny that God is a Spirit, and that they who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth. But whether we are preaching, singing, or confessing our faith, God's Word is the only word which we may take upon our lips. This is also the great argument of the church, in so far as she still remains Reformed, for singing nothing else in her worship but the Word of God, especially as found in the 150 Psalms of David.

All this is something that our flesh rejects. All of the hypocrisy that passes under the name of worship and all our own false pretenses are stripped bare by this revelation of Himself that God gives us in the Second Commandment. Only in Christ can we receive and obey this Word of God. Only in Christ and by His Spirit can we worship God in spirit and in truth, for only through His redeeming work do we receive the glorious light of the truth in our hearts (II Cor. 4:6). As Jesus Himself says, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me" (Jn. 14:6). And why? Jesus answers that too when He says, "I am the way, the truth and the life." He alone gives us the truth in the midst of our life of lies, and only He gives also the life that is necessary to receive the truth. Thus He is the way to the Father Whom we worship and adore.

Let us, therefore, make use of the sword of the Spirit which is the Word and revelation of God to fight the battle of faith on the battlefield of the Second Commandment:

For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10:4, 5).

In that way we confess His glory in true gratitude as the One Who has saved our spirits and bodies from eternal damnation, and given to us the glorious light of the truth in Christ, His Son and our Lord.

Book Review

PERSPECTIVES ON THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH, Peter De Klerk and Richard R. De Ridder, Editors; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI; 404 pp., cloth. [Reviewed by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema]

This book is in the nature of a *Festschrift* in honor of Dr. John H. Kromminga at the occasion of his retirement as President of Calvin Seminary. But it is not like the ordinary *Festschrift*. The information on the dust jacket offers a brief description of the

book's contents:

"... this volume of essays looks at the Christian Reformed Church in North America from various viewpoints. While most festschriften are of interest only to scholars in a particular discipline, the varied studies in this volume will appeal also to laypersons, especially those who are members of the Christian Reformed Church. Since the Christian Reformed Church has long exercised an influence within American evangelicalism disproportionate to its size, those outside the denomination will also be interested in the eighteen studies in this unique volume.

"Part One consists of six studies in the history of the Christian Reformed Church, each of which reflects painstaking research. The early years of the denomination are probed in a fascinating way, revealing the development of the church from a tiny Dutch immigrant church to a healthy American denomination struggling to keep its heritage. Subjects in this section include immigration, architecture of early church buildings, the 'Masonic Controversy,' and a revealing sketch of Hendrik P. Scholte, immigrant leader in Pella, Iowa.

"Part Two is largely theological in nature and includes articles on the lifetime tenure of ministers, missions, and theological doctrines such as the covenant, the kingdom of God, and the antithesis.

"Part Three describes how the Christian Reformed Church faced the challenges of ecumenical involvement. It portrays a church striving to retain its heritage and theological distinctiveness as it becomes involved with other churches and ecumenical organizations."

The eighteen chapters of this volume are by as many different authors, not all of them Christian Reformed. It struck me that, as far as I could tell, there is no representative of the Canadian wing of the CRC among the writers. There are writers from the RCA, from the GKN, and from the CRC of the Netherlands.

Naturally, a book of this kind varies greatly, from author to author, as far as interest and quality are concerned.

Personally, I found the historical section to be the most interesting. The theological section, in my opinion, falls rather flat. I do not believe that Anthony Hoekema's chapter on the doctrine of the covenant, for example, is accurate; I have reference especially to his description of W. Heyn's covenant view. Nor do I find that Henry Stob's presentation does justice to the concept of the antithesis, much less to the view of Herman Hoeksema. The section on ecumenical involvement is, if nothing else, informative.

Interesting reading.

NOTICE!!!

All students enrolled in the Protestant Reformed Seminary, who will be in need of financial assistance for the coming school year, are asked to contact the Student Aid Committee, Mr. Larry Meulenber, Secretary, 342 Begole, S.W., Grand Rapids, MI 49504. (Phone 616-453-8466). This contact should be made before the next meeting of the Committee on March 13, 1984, the Lord willing.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On February 29, 1984, the Lord willing, our parents, MR. AND MRS. HENRY KAMPHUIS will celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary. We, their children and grandchildren are thankful for their covenantal instruction and pray that God will continue to bless them and keep them in His care.

"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children." (Psalm 103:17).

Rog and Phyllis King
Rog and Peg Kamphuis
Jim and Bev Langerak
Don and Mary Kamphuis
John and Sally Kamphuis

Bob and Deb Kamphuis
Dan Kamphuis
Tom and Irene Kamphuis
and 21 grandchildren

NOTICE!!!

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet in Loveland, Colorado on Wednesday, March 7, 1984 at 8:30 A.M., the Lord willing.

Rev. David Engelsma
Stated Clerk

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On February 6, 1984, our beloved parents, grandparents, and great grandparents, MR. AND MRS. BEN BLEYENBERG, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary.

We thank our heavenly Father for faithfully guiding them these many years and for blessing us with God-fearing parents who instructed and guided us in His ways. Our prayer is that God may continue to bless and sustain them in the remaining years of their earthly pilgrimage.

"For this God is our God forever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death" (Ps. 48:14).

Tony and Wilmyrna Jansma
Artie Haverhals
Peter and Bernice Rynders
John and Lori Hoksbergen

Alvin and Betty Bleyenbergh
27 grandchildren
24 great grandchildren

NOTICE!!!

The South Holland Protestant Reformed School Board is seeking applicants for teaching during the 1984-85 school year.

Please call Board Secretary James Lanting at 312-339-1070 or at 312-596-5093 and send resume to Box 156, South Holland, IL 60473.

NOTICE!!!

Part-time elementary teaching position available at Adams Street Christian School for the 1984-85 school year. Music background useful but not essential. Send resume to: Adams Education Committee, c/o James Eldersveld, 2161 Osceola, S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49506.

Report of Classis East

Classis East met in regular session on January 11, 1984 at First Church, Grand Rapids. Each congregation was represented by two delegates. Present for the first time were the delegates from the newly-formed congregation of Byron Center. Rev. B. Woudenberg chaired this session of Classis.

Classis had a full day of activities — this is the meeting when synodical agenda items are handled. The usual routine business was also transacted.

The first item of significance on the agenda was the request from 26 brethren from the Grandville, Michigan area to establish a new congregation in that locale. At least 20 of these signators were from the burgeoning congregation of Hope. Classis gave its enthusiastic endorsement to this request.

Two overtures to Synod 1984 were also presented. The first came from First Church and concerned a change of policy for determining synodical assessments. First Church is proposing that churches be allowed to adjust their assessments monthly in order to take into account fluctuation in membership. Classis forwarded this overture to Synod with its disapproval on the grounds that the present rules adequately cover emergency situations, that these rules have served the churches well in the past, and that confusion both for the synodical treasurer and consistories could result. (Grounds paraphrased)

The second overture concerned the early appointment of synodical committees of pre-advice. Classis also forwarded this overture to Synod with its disapproval on the grounds that committees can not be appointed for a body which has not yet been constituted, that men, other than delegates, would be appointing these committees, that there is danger in having the same men appoint these committees year after year, and that there is a danger that delegates would come thoroughly prepared only for the material assigned to them. (Grounds paraphrased)

Classis granted classical appointments to Grandville and Byron Center according to the following schedule: GRANDVILLE: February 5 - Flikkema, February 12 - Joostens, February 19 - Haak, March 4 - Van Baren, March 11 - Miersma, March 18 - Woudenberg, April 1 - Bruinsma, April 8 - De Vries, April 15 - Flikkema, April 29 - Joostens, May 6 - Haak, May 13 - Van Baren. BYRON CENTER: January 22 - Miersma, February 5 - Woudenberg, February 12 - Bruinsma, February 19 - De Vries, March 4 - Flikkema, March 11 - Joostens, March 18 - Haak, April 1 - Van Baren, April 8 - Miersma, April 15 - Woudenberg, April 29 - Bruinsma, May 6 - De Vries, May 13 - Flikkema.

Subsidy requests for 1985 were presented by Byron Center for \$9,170, by Covenant for \$15,380, and by Kalamazoo for \$7,000. Byron Center also requested \$12,760 for 1984. These requests were approved and forwarded to Synod for approval.

Results of voting were as follows: Rev. De Vries was elected to a three-year term on the Classical Committee, Rev. Haak and Rev. Joostens were elected as delegates *ad examina*, and Rev. H. Veldman and Rev. C. Hanko were elected as church visitors. Synodical delegates were chosen as follows: MINISTERS: *Primi*: C. Haak, M. Joostens, R. Miersma, G. Van Baren; *Secundi*: W. Bruinsma, M. De Vries, R. Flikkema, R. Hanko; ELDERS: *Primi*: G. Bol, C. Doezeema, F. Hanko, G. Van Overloop; *Secundi*: G. Feenstra, A. Knott, Harlow Kuiper, D. Lotterman.

One discipline matter was conducted in closed session.

Classis will meet next at Southwest Church on May 9, 1984.

Respectfully submitted,
Jon J. Huiskens
Stated Clerk